



ADDING PROFESSIONAL VALUE TO A GRASSROOTS NETWORK

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Alumni Engagement: Opportunities and Challenge

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AGENDA

1. The Grassroots Network
2. Establishing USJETAA
3. Why Professionalize the Network?
4. Key Questions
 1. Who Are Your Members?
 2. How Do You Provide Value?
 3. How Do You Find Your Members?



THE GRASSROOTS NETWORK

- Japan Exchange and Teaching Program
 - Run by government of Japan
 - 30+ years
- 36,000+ JET alumni in the United States
 - Ages: mid-20s to mid-50s
 - Various paths after JET
- 19 JET Alumni Association Chapters in United States
 - Volunteer run
 - Various sizes (100 members to 2,000 members)
 - History varies (5 years old to 30 years old)
 - Minimally funded



ESTABLISHING USJETAA

- Recommendation from CULCON
- Tried to work within the existing structure
 - Volunteers at capacity
 - No unified vision
 - No central organization mobilize the network
 - Identified the need for umbrella organization
- Sought input from the network
 - What do they need?
 - What are their struggles?
 - What is missing?
- Founded USJETAA in 2015
- Role of USJETAA
 - Supports the chapter leaders
 - Training & guidance
 - Content creation & dissemination
 - Institutional knowledge & information
 - Supports individual alumni
 - Career & professional development
 - Virtual content
 - Connection to U.S.-Japan community
 - Promotes U.S.-Japan relations
 - Through our own activities and the above

WHY PROFESSIONALIZE THE NETWORK?

- To achieve your organization's goals/mission
 - JET alumni can play a powerful role in U.S.-Japan relations
 - We want to strengthen the capacity of the network
- To increase impact of the network
 - Strengthen affiliation
 - Keep them affiliated over time
 - Promote and recruit
 - Increase the number of high quality JET Program applicants
 - Grassroots/volunteer networks face issues
 - High turnover; loss of institutional knowledge
 - Low budget; lack of fundraising ability
 - Difficult to serve the varied needs of their members
 - Lack of “know how” or just struggling to keep the lights on



KEY QUESTIONS: WHO ARE YOUR MEMBERS?

- To professionalize an existing network or create a new one you need to know about your target members
- Key Questions
 - How old are they?
 - Different age groups want different things
 - What do they have in common other than your program?
 - Where are they located?
 - Regional, national, or international?
 - Is there an existing network?
 - Are groups already formed?
 - What do they want?
 - What are their needs?



KEY QUESTIONS: HOW DO YOU PROVIDE VALUE?

- If you don't provide value, alumni will not connect or stay connected
- Can't just serve your own organizational needs/mission
- Key Questions
 - Why should your alumni affiliate?
 - Why should your alumni stay connected?
 - Why should your alumni reconnect?
 - Are you meeting their needs or wants?
 - How does your mission connect with the alumni's needs?

KEY QUESTIONS: HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR MEMBERS?

- Take stock of what you already have:
 - Lists of names
 - Records with emails addresses (may be old)
 - Social media accounts and groups
- Ways to find them:
 - Existing network and word of mouth
 - Your social media accounts
 - LinkedIn



CONTACT ME!

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